

Its Not Farming

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Protester fail to halt livestock auction GLENVIEW PARK DISTRICT Northwest community briefs August 6, 2010

After four hours on the auction block, Buddy the pig sold for \$2.50 a pound, low by Lake County Fair standards, but fair enough to the Wilmette 4-H family that raised him.

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The sale was unacceptable to protesters at Wagner Farm in Glenview. Wagner Farm is owned by the Glenview Park District, and the protesters don't like that Buddy and other livestock destined for slaughter were being raised on public property.

The 4-H Clovers club at Wagner Farm has generated controversy since it was established in 2002, but the criticism ramped up in recent weeks as the Lake County Fair and its livestock auction neared.

Several people rallied at Wagner Farm on Saturday, the day of the auction at the fair in Grayslake, hoping to draw attention to what they call animal cruelty. Others call it farming.

Glenview resident Debby Rubenstein founded the Wagner Farm Rescue fund about the same time that the Clovers formed because she thinks that a club that operates on public property should not raise animals to be sold for slaughter.

"We did receive a lot of support from the rally, a lot of people stopping by," she said.

But Regina Stilp, the mother of 10-year-old Hans Stilp, who tended to Buddy, said the sale of 27 Glenview Clovers pigs and lambs proved to her that the rally the morning of the auction was ineffective.

It also meant that a letter sent last week by Rubenstein's attorney, Gary Shulman, to the Glenview Park District and village of Glenview did not have the intended impact.

Shulman said that in the letter, he called for the auction of the Wagner Farm 4-H animals to be halted and the animals be purchased at fair value by the Wagner Farm Rescue Fund. They then could live their lives on a farm in Madison, Wis.

But while this year's auction has ended, Rubenstein said she and other activists plan to continue their campaign against the 4-H club's practices. She said they aren't seeking to eliminate the local chapter – they want to reach a compromise with the leaders.

– Jeff Danna, TribLocal reporter

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